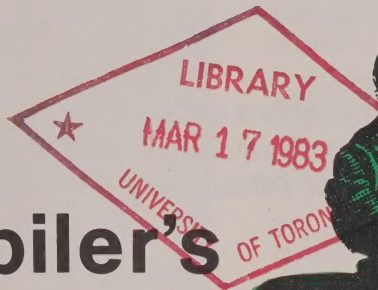


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The Snowmobiler's Handbook

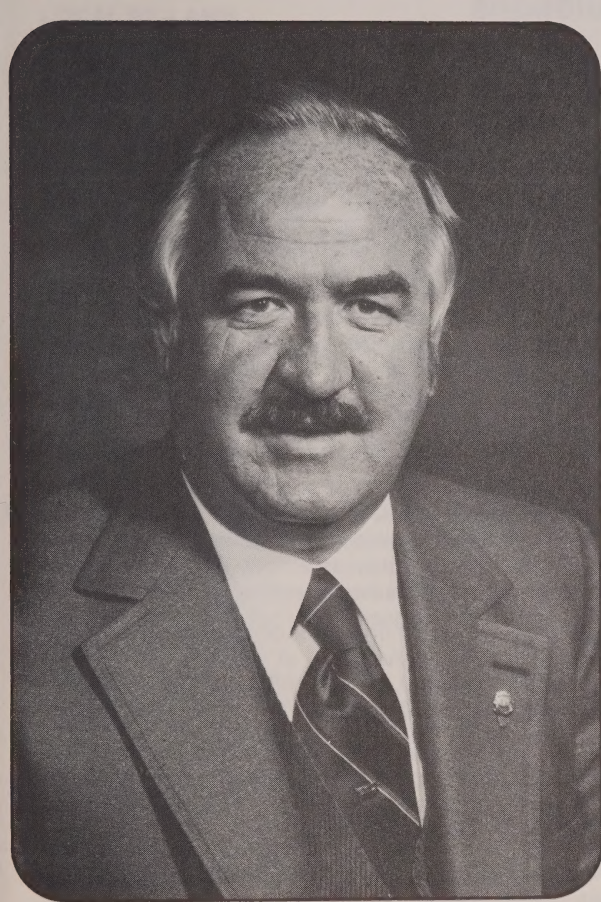


Ministry of
Transportation and
Communications

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This booklet is only a guide

For official purposes, please refer to the
Motorized Snow Vehicles Act of Ontario



Snowmobiling has become a way of life for many Ontarians.

It's a healthy sport and lots of fun. And it's also a necessity in remote areas or during emergencies.

Wherever they're driven, operating skill is called for. The snowmobile is not a toy. It is a power-driven vehicle that must be under the driver's control every second. Otherwise, the driver could become another accident statistic.

Everyone who operates a snowmobile should know Ontario's laws which apply to the machine; they should also know the machine itself; how it works; how to drive it in different situations.

This handbook was prepared by MTC with the co-operation of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs and the Ontario Safety League. It is intended as a common-sense guide for those who drive a snowmobile or hope to do so.

Happy snowmobiling — and GO Safely!

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim Snow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James Snow
Minister of Transportation
and Communications

A Guide to Ontario's Snowmobile Regulations

Definitions under the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act, 1980

Trail means the whole of any trail established and maintained by a recreational organization for the use of motorized snow vehicles.

Serviced roadway means the part of highway that is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular traffic, and includes the ploughed portion of the shoulder.

All Motorized Snow Vehicles must be registered

REGISTRATION

All Motorized Snow Vehicles must be registered under the regulations now in effect. Every dealer who sells a new MSV must register it on behalf of the owner with the Ministry of Transportation and Communications within six days of the sale. Do not drive your MSV anywhere until it has been registered with the Ministry.

The Registration Certificate bears a registration number which must be attached to, or painted on, both sides of the MSV's cowling. Numbers must not be less than 50 mm (2") or more than 80 mm (3") high, with 6 mm (¼") to 13 mm (½") stroke width, and must contrast with the snowmobile's colour. There is no fee for registration.

PERMITS

In addition to registration, you must have a permit to drive your motorized snow vehicle, unless you are driving it only on land owned or occupied by the owner of the vehicle . . . or in an exempted area in remote northwestern Ontario.

Fee for the annual permit is \$10.00. When your permit is issued it will be affixed to your Registration Certificate

and you will be given two adhesive stickers and back-ground patches which must be affixed to each side of the MSV's cowling between the registration number and the rear of the cowling.

WHERE YOU CAN OR CAN'T DRIVE

You may operate your motorized snow vehicle on your own property, **on private trails of organizations to which you belong**, or on other land with the owner's written permission. You may drive it in public parks, conservation areas, except where prohibited.

Along a King's Highway or secondary highway, except where prohibited, you may drive your MSV in the part of the right-of-way between the shoulder and the adjoining property fence, provided that you drive as far away from the serviced road as possible.

Generally, you may not drive on the serviced portion (from shoulder to shoulder) of a King's Highway or secondary highway, except to cross, and this you must do only at a 90° angle.

You may not operate a MSV anywhere on the "400" series of freeways; the Queen Elizabeth Way; the Ottawa Queensway; the Kitchener-Waterloo Expressway; from fence to fence.

(For full details see Motorized Snow Vehicles Act and regulations, 1980).

LOCAL BY-LAWS

Local municipalities have the right to pass by-laws regulating, governing or prohibiting the operation of MSV's anywhere within their boundaries, on or off the highway.

HIGHWAY DRIVING

To drive a MSV along a highway, a person must be 16 years of age or older, and must hold a valid Ontario driver's licence, or snowmobile operator's licence. Residents of another province, state or country must be in possession of a valid driver's licence which allows them to operate a MSV.

Holders aged 12 and 13 may operate a snowmobile on trails; aged 14 and 15 may operate on trails and cross a highway at a 90-degree angle; 16 and over may operate on trails, and cross highways at a 90-degree angle or on highways where legally permitted.

WHAT IS A HIGHWAY

The Motorized Snow Vehicles Act defines a highway as "including a common and public highway, street, avenue, parkway, driveway, square, place, bridge, viaduct or trestle, designed and intended for, or used by, the general public for the passage of vehicles".

THE SPEED LIMITS

The general rule is that you may not drive a MSV faster than 20 km/h on a highway where the speed limit for cars is 50 km/h or less, or in any public park, or exhibition grounds. Also you may not drive faster than 50 km/h on any highway where the car speed limit is more than 50 km/h.

These speed limits apply also to trails, except where otherwise posted.

Municipal councils may, by by-law, set higher or lower speed limits for motorized snow vehicles for highways, trails, parks, etc., under their jurisdiction. Check with the municipality for local by-laws.

IDENTIFICATION

Carry your driver's licence or snowmobile operator's licence when you are operating your MSV. You must show it when asked by a police officer or conservation officer, or provide your correct name and address, if not carrying it.

If you are operating your vehicle on someone else's property, you must also stop when asked by the owner to do so and identify yourself.

Failure to stop and identify yourself in the above circumstances can result in arrest.

WEAR A HELMET



A helmet must be worn by every person driving or riding on a motorized snow vehicle or on a cutter, toboggan, sled or similar conveyance towed by a MSV wherever the vehicle is being operated except on land occupied by the vehicle's owner. The helmet shall comply with standards established for motorcycle helmets. It is recommended that helmets should always be worn when driving a MSV.

Many helmets are designed so face shields can be attached to help prevent windburn, frostbite, sunblindness, the eye-watering effect of the wind, and protection for the eyes from branches and twigs when travelling through wooded areas. Always wear a face shield or goggles. Select lightly tinted and shatterproof

shields or goggles to match conditions; for example, gray or green for bright, glaring conditions; clear plastic for dull, cloudy days; amber or deep yellow for late afternoon cruising, to overcome flat light which can hide depressions in the snow. Avoid dark tinted shields or goggles, as they could restrict your vision.

THE LAND OWNER'S LIABILITY

The owner or occupier of land owes no duty of care toward anyone driving or riding on a MSV or being towed by one, if the driver or rider is a trespasser or licensee. The owner-occupier does have the duty not to create danger with the deliberate intent of doing harm or damage to the trespasser or licensee.

THE VEHICLE OWNER'S LIABILITY

If someone else uses your MSV with your consent you are jointly and severally liable for any damages respecting damage and injury arising out of operation of the vehicle, or for penalties provided for any breach of provincial statutes or regulations, or municipal by-laws regarding motorized snow vehicles.

TRESPASSING

All persons, including those operating a MSV, are subject to **The Trespass to Property Act 1980**. Under that Act, a person is guilty of an offence, where without express permission he/she

- ... enters on premises when entry is prohibited under that Act; or
- ... engages in an activity on premises when the activity is prohibited under that Act; or
- ... does not leave the premises immediately after he/she is directed to do so by the occupier or a person authorized by the occupier.

The fine on conviction may be up to \$1,000.00. In addition to the fine, the same court that convicts can order the trespasser to pay for proven damages up to \$1,000.00. If the prosecution is brought by a private prosecutor, in addition to the fine and any damages, the trespasser will usually be liable for the reasonable costs incurred by the occupier in prosecuting. These costs could be assessed at several hundred dollars.

A pamphlet summarizing **The Trespass to Property Act** and a more detailed booklet, which includes a copy of the Act, are available in English and French from the Publication Centre, 5th Floor, 880 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8.

INSURANCE

A person who drives a MSV anywhere except on land occupied by the vehicle's owner must carry liability insurance and produce evidence etc.

COLLISION REPORTS

You must report to the police forthwith any collision on or off the highway that results in injury to any person or damage to property apparently exceeding \$400.

TOW-BAR USE

Only a rigid tow-bar may be used when a MSV is towing a cutter, toboggan, sled or similar conveyance. Towing is prohibited on a serviced roadway except to cross the roadway at a 90° angle.

(This doesn't apply to a motorized snow vehicle being used to free a stuck vehicle or conveyance, or for an emergency rescue, or for trail maintenance.)

The foregoing is intended only as a guide to the complete information contained in the Ontario Motorized Snow Vehicles Act and regulations thereunder, and **The Trespass to Property Act**.

Check with the municipality in which you operate your motorized snow vehicle, for local by-laws.

Snowmobiling Safety Tips

Before every trip, make sure you're well prepared. Check your machine to ensure it's in good working order. Your life may depend on it.

Check the entire steering mechanism.

Turn the handlebars back and forth to make sure turning is "free".

Check the condition and tension of the motor drive belt. Change it if necessary, or even if you're in doubt about its reliability.

Always check the emergency switch, the front headlamps and tail lights, the battery solution level, and the free movement of throttle and brake levers.

When checking the spark plugs or estimating the tank's fuel level, don't use matches or a lighter. And **never** add fuel when the motor is running.

Better take along:

a first-aid kit, a tool kit, an extra ignition key, a drive belt, and spark plugs. On excursions, include a compass, trail maps, flashlight, hunting knife, hatchet, fuel reserves and matches in a waterproof box.

Before every trip, check local weather forecasts.

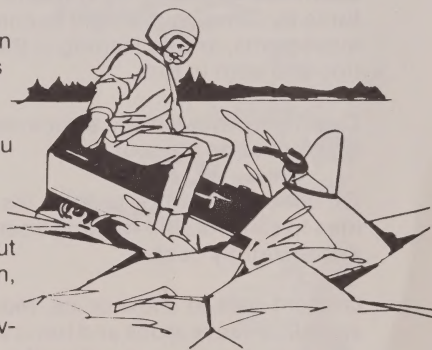
Tell someone where you'll be travelling — and when you expect to be back.

Use the "buddy system" — don't go out alone.

Read carefully the owner's manual supplied by the dealer. Keep it in your machine at all times.

Travelling frozen lakes and rivers can be dangerous and sometimes fatal. If you are in an unfamiliar area, ask local authorities or residents about the ice condition, inlets, outlets, springs, fast moving currents or other hazards.

Never attempt to operate your snowmobile on ice that may be too weak to support you and the vehicle.



Go Safely Tips

Driving a snowmobile calls for the same alertness that driving a car does, plus complete command of your reflexes. Adopt the driving position that gives you the most comfort and security for the terrain over which you're driving.

If you're a beginner, test your driving skills on open terrain until you can handle four basic positions: sitting, kneeling, standing and posting.

Learn how to control your balance on turns by using your weight to control your movements, and by leaning in the direction you wish to turn.

Driving on level terrain, sit or kneel with both knees on the seat.

On uneven or bumpy ground, it's a good idea to stand on the running board with knees slightly bent.

On hard-packed snow or ice, reduce your speed, because stops and turns are difficult to make, and you need greater distance.

When the snowmobile is trapped in deep snow, never try to free it without turning off the motor.

Snowmobile Accidents

During the 1981-82 snowmobiling season, 25 persons were killed and 641 injured.

On-highway, 18 snowmobile drivers, 2 passengers were killed; 160 drivers, 40 passengers and 13 pedestrians were injured.

Off-highway, 5 snowmobile drivers were killed; 204 drivers, 42 passengers and 9 pedestrians were injured.

In addition, 3 snowmobile drivers and 1 passenger drowned when they drove their snow vehicles into open water or broke through thin ice.

Property damage in on-highway traffic accidents amounted to \$187,570; on-highway non-traffic property damage was \$168,125 and off-highway property costs were \$339,505, for a total of \$695,200.

Drinking and Driving

Under the Criminal Code (Canada) if you are convicted of driving your snowmobile while impaired by alcohol or a drug; or having more than 0.08% alcohol in your blood; or refusing a breathalyzer test, you will be liable:

- on first offence, to a fine of \$50 to \$2,000, or to be jailed for up to 6 months or both.
- on second offence, to be jailed for not less than 14 days and up to one year.
- on subsequent offences, to be jailed for not less than 3 months and up to two years.

If you are convicted of a drinking and driving offence you will also have a criminal record.

Trail Snowmobiling

Ontario's snowmobile trails are established and maintained by the snowmobile clubs.

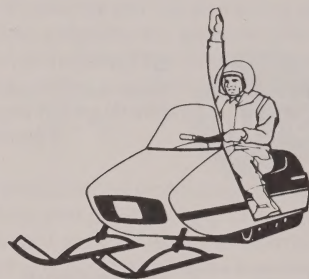
To obtain information about the trail nearest to you, contact your local snowmobile club or the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, R.R. No. 1, Jordan Station, Ontario L0R 1S0.
Phone (416) 562-4922

Know Your Signals

Every snowmobiler should relay the proper signals to the ones behind him or her.

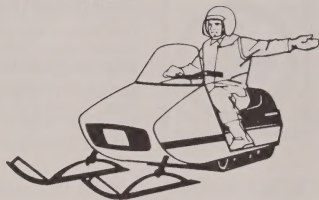
STOP

raise right arm straight above your head.



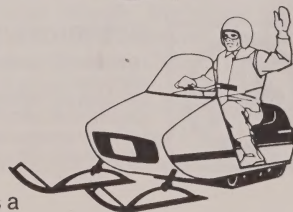
LEFT TURN

extend your left hand straight out.



RIGHT TURN

extend left arm and raise the hand to a vertical position so it forms a right angle at the elbow.



TRAIL SIGNS

For your own safety and the safety of others, watch for trail signs such as these - and obey them.



STOP

Colour: white on red
Size: 30 cm x 30 cm
(12" x 12")



STOP AHEAD

Colour: red on yellow with
black arrow and
black border
Size: 22 cm x 22 cm
(8 5/8" x 8 5/8")



TRAIL BLAZER

Directional marker
Colour: black on orange
Size: 18 cm x 8 cm
(7" x 3")



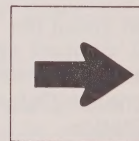
PERMISSIVE

(snowmobiling permitted)
Background: reflective silver
Legend: green circle, black
snowmobile
Size: 30 cm x 30 cm
(12" x 12")



STAY ON TRAIL

Directional marker
Colour: black on white
Size: 22 cm x 15 cm
(8 5/8" x 5 3/4")



ARROW

Directional Marker
Colour: black on orange
Size: 16 cm x 16 cm
(6 1/2" x 6 1/2")



RESTRICTIVE

(snowmobiling not
permitted)
Background: reflective silver
Legend: red circle, black
snowmobile
Size: 30 cm x 30 cm
(12" x 12")



DANGER

Danger
Background: yellow
Legend: black
Size: 30 cm x 30 cm
(12" x 12")



KEEP RIGHT

Directional marker
Colour: black on yellow
Size: 22 cm x 22 cm
(8 5/8" x 8 5/8")

HIGHWAY SIGNS



Snowmobiles are prohibited on a street or highway where this sign is posted.



Snowmobiles are permitted on a street or highway where this sign is posted.



SNOWMOBILE
CROSSING

This sign warns motorists that snowmobiles are permitted to cross the highway.

Learn safer snowmobiling through an OFSC Driver Training Course

Snowmobile driver-training courses are offered by club instructors trained by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs to instruct youngsters aged 12 to 15 and those persons 16 and older who do not have an Ontario motor vehicle driver's licence.

The training courses were prepared by the OFSC in co-operation with the Ontario Safety League and MTC.

Successful graduates of an approved driver-training course will receive a snowmobile operator's licence from their Course Instructor.

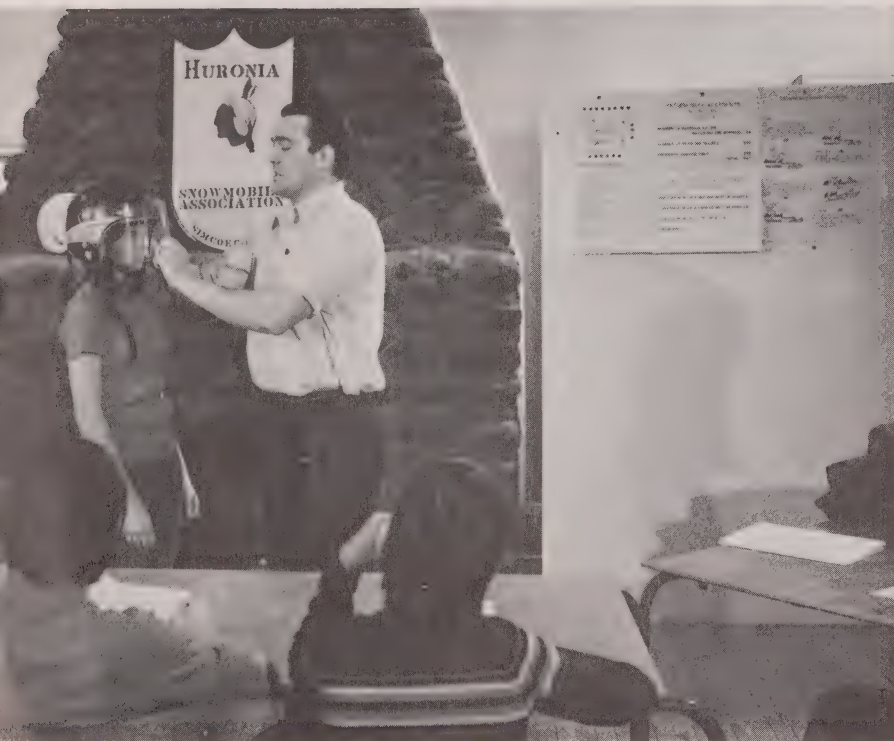
Holders aged 12 and 13 may operate a snowmobile on public trails; aged 14 and 15 may operate on public trails and cross a highway at a 90° angle; 16 and over may operate on public trails and cross highways at a 90° angle or on highways where legally permitted.

Each course takes six hours, usually over a three-day period, covering safe operating procedures, snowmobile laws, knowledge of the machine, maintenance, riding positions, survival, first aid, night riding, trail signs, clothing, and storage.

It also encourages good courteous driving habits and skills to help snowmobilers avoid accidents and property damage — and to enable all snowmobilers to get more fun out of the sport.

Not just for beginners, the course can be a valuable refresher for those who now enjoy snowmobiling but would like to "brush up on the fine points".

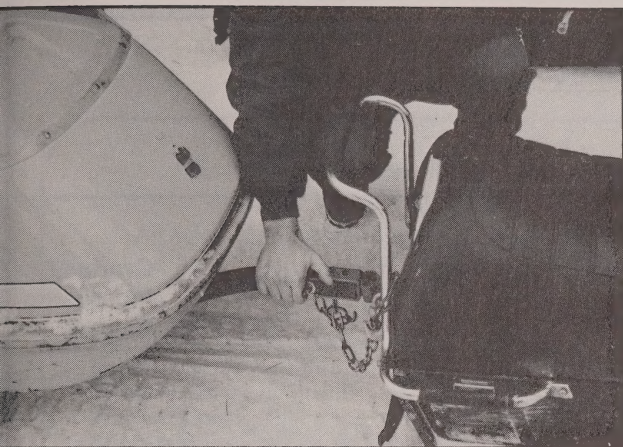
For the location of your nearest OFSC member club offering the driver training courses, and costs involved, contact: OFSC Driver Training Office, R.R. No. 1, Jordan Station, Ontario L0R 1S0 Phone (416) 562-4922 or the Ontario Safety League, 82 Peter Street, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2G5. Phone (416) 593-2670.



Students at OFSC driver training courses learn the skills of snowmobiling and the safety "musts", including wearing a helmet.

Reminder . . .

Successful graduates of OFSC Driver Training Courses will receive a snowmobile operator's licence from their Course Instructor



When towing, use rigid tow-bar and safety chain



Cross highways only at a 90° angle.



Always carry your licence



Watch for trail and highway signs

Wind Chill Factor

Why does it always feel much colder outdoors on a windy day than when there's no wind, especially in winter?

This "coldness" is caused by the faster cooling effect of the wind, resulting in the feeling that it's colder than it really is. This combined effect of wind and low temperatures is known as the "wind chill factor".

Snowmobilers should be aware of the wind chill factor. Dress warmly and make sure exposed skin doesn't suffer. Also make sure that very young passengers are properly "bundled up" with their hands and face well protected.

WIND CHILL

Wind Speed

km/h 8 16 24 32 40 48 56 64

Actual Temp. (°C)

0	-2	-8	-11	-14	-16	-17	-19	-19	Gradually Increasing Danger
-5	-7	-14	-18	-21	-23	-25	-26	-27	
-10	-12	-20	-25	-28	-31	-33	-34	-35	Dangerous
-15	-18	-26	-32	-35	-38	-40	-42	-43	
-20	-23	-32	-38	-43	-46	-48	-50	-51	Extremely Dangerous
-25	-28	-38	-45	-50	-53	-56	-57	-59	
-30	-33	-45	-52	-57	-61	-63	-65	-67	
-35	-39	-51	-59	-64	-68	-71	-73	-75	
-40	-44	-57	-65	-71	-75	-79	-81	-83	
-45	-49	-63	-72	-78	-83	-86	-89	-90	
-50	-54	-69	-79	-85	-90	-94	-96	-98	

The Snowmobiler's Code of Ethics

All enthusiastic snowmobilers should practise what is outlined in each statement of the code, to keep this fine sport a growing part of winter recreation.

1. I will be a good sportsman and conservationist. I recognize that people judge all snowmobile owners by my actions. I will use my influence with other snowmobile owners and operators to promote sportsmanlike conduct.

2. I will not litter trails or camping areas. I will not pollute lakes or streams. I will carry out what I carried in.

3. I will not damage living trees, shrubs or other natural features.

4. I will respect other people's property and rights.

5. I will lend a helping hand when I see someone in distress.

6. I will make myself and my machine available to assist in search and rescue operations.

7. I will not interfere with or harass hikers, skiers, snowshoers, ice fishermen, or other winter sportsmen. I will respect their rights to enjoy our recreation facilities.

8. I will know and obey all Federal, Provincial and local rules regulating the operation of snowmobiles in areas where I use my vehicle.

9. I will not harass wildlife. I will avoid areas posted for the protection of wildlife.

10. I will not snowmobile where snowmobiles are prohibited.



Ontario

Ministry of
Transportation and
Communications

Hon. James Snow, Minister
Harold Gilbert, Deputy Minister